Chapter-V

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Tagore, unlike T.S. Eliot, is never a poet of ‘Smirky’ cynicism. His poetry, without ignoring the presence of gloom and despair in life, as an embodiment of an inimitable ascetic grandeur and a fount of joy. To him, joy, like love and beauty, is a spiritual experience. As it is an inscribable ingredient of love and beauty, it is altogether different from pleasure. Since it endows human sensibility with a shaping power of imagination, it is essentially a creative impulse, a flow of feeling for creation from within coloring human impression that come from without. Therefore, it is a basic necessity to sweeten life. It springs from the plenitude of human soul and when mineralized his true self, he realizes joy. It is an inherent possession of soul. Man realizes joy. It is an inherent possession of soul. Man loses it only when he indulges in logic and intellection. Tagore seems to have realized the truth of Vedantic Mata-psychology which says that mind is not perfect and self – sufficient, and hence hankers after objects of pleasure. Human soul is ever in perfect poise and bliss. Tagore writes in Panchbhut:
It is alone integrally perfect, carefree and effortless. Over its boundless blue forehead there is no mark of intelligence, there shines forever the light of genius.¹

Man kills this joy in soul when he employs his agency of reasoning to dissect it. Tagore regards human mind and its power of reasoning and questioning as a blind which blurs his vision of joy. “When the burden of this mind is not felt, we know that condition to be joy”.² Man’s soul is the permanent basis of our phenomenal self: Man’s mind, including both the desiring and reasoning parts, in an external possession. It is subject to change and decay. Human soul on the contrary, is not only changeless and without decay, but also may be regarded “as the principle of unity among the diverse psychological faculties and their activities”³. When the soul asserts itself over the external or grosser faculties and brings harmony amongst them, man tastes the joy that is inner and profound. Tagore seems to say that in order to have joy, we should discipline the sensuous and the reasoning self, and should give full play to the real self. There are others who hold that the aesthetic enjoyment comes from freedom of understanding to unify the sensuous manifold without rigorously following the lances of unification; it is not determined by intellectual concepts and categories.
Tagore’s idea of joy is not at all associated with cognitive faculties. To him joy is an intuitive activity. When the cognitive activities, which are more or less pragmatic, are stilled into nothing, human soul attains a higher freedom and plenitude from which joy naturally flows. “Joy is the outcome of detachment from self and lives in freedom of spirit”.

A new sensibility, a new vision comes to the poet. His spirit awakes into the light of joy. The trivial and unpleasant seem to disappear from life. That very day he wrote his superb lyric, “The awakening of the Waterfall”. Prof. Humayun Kabir finds the poem ‘remarkable’ for the boldness of images and for the fusion of nature and man in an indissoluble unity. The poem marks a change from the sad and dreamy world of self introspection to a bright world in which beauty and joy live. He attained a mystic vision which revealed to him the oneness of the universe and the eternal continuity of the spirit of life. This mystical experience brought to him a ‘human message’ and suddenly expanded his consciousness in the super personal world of man. He felt as if some ancient mist had in a moment lifted from his night, and the morning light on the face of the world revealed an inner radiance of joy. The poem symbolizes the awakening of an internal vision which enabled the poet to see
everything bathed in joy. Hitherto the poet's heart was an icy cave. The waters of feeling and emotions remained congealed in that dark and gloomy icy cage. The cave had no communion with the outside world flooded by the warm and bright rays of the sun. Then all of a sudden the 'rays of a morning sun' and 'the song of the birds' pierced into the gloomy concern of his heart. It was a novel experience. This impact of impression from without was realized in the heart of the poet which in turn reciprocated to illumine the world outside. The snow of melancholic brooding melted into waters of intoxicated joy which went on surging in his heart. His soul woke up to an irresistible desire for expression. It abandoned itself to a reckless and delirious passion of delight:

An irresistible passion assumes the personality of a waterfall which breaks the icy and rocky barriers to gush out into the open world of light. Its dream has been broken. Singing and dancing, it emerges from the frozen cave of the poet's heart and leaps from its craggy home into the open verdant valley below:

The waters assume the image of a ferocious lion which cannot be tamed and kept in cage for long. The poet's 'soul is
aglow and declares to turn his back on 'rampart of gloom' or the hurdle of stone 'symbolizing' mawkishness and inhibitions. When the ice has melted into water, when the waters of desire overflow its shores, nothing in the world can frighten the poet, nothing can come in his way of expression. The poet vows 'to break this prison-house of stone and flood the world with the waters of compassion', he will 'pour' himself, out in mad fervid songs, flashing the bounty of my hair and weaving bouquets of bloom. He will 'float in the air' his 'rainbow wings' and 'drain' his heart 'to print a smile' on the fleeting sun-rays. The images speak of an ecstasy of the abandon, of a frenzied joy:

I'll rush from peak to peak, and sweep from hill to hill, and laugh and chant and clap to my own measure.

The poet's heart is 'crowded with desire and bliss', and is awake. The rolling ocean invites him to join it in its play of joy. The 'dark prison cell' can no longer keep him its prisoner. The rain will break this prison-wall and the poet has to say that the "bird song is in my ears and the sunshine in my eyes". So, the poem is a glorification of life—a life newly discovered, full of joy and activity. It symbolizes life as a dynamic force which refuses to remain confined in the dark cave
of seclusion. The stream of individual life in its onward march towards the sea of universal life must break down the rocky boulders of age-long customs and traditions which stand in its way blocking its path of progress. The poet's heart has awakened to the joy of the world. He is now a newly awakened consciousness. He hears the call of the ocean which urges him to break away from the prison house of morbid self-introspection and to emerge into the radiance of the rising sun to embrace the world with a joyous heart.

Tagore now ceases to be a lone wanderer in the wilderness of heart. He has rediscovered himself and now finds life on earth abounding in joy. The discovery dispels the languor and that mental miasma the product of this self-introspection. This new realization reveals to him that life is not a 'tale told by an idiot, full of sounds and furies, signifying nothing'. He realizes that life on earth is a reality, that its play with love and friendship, tears and laughter, is beautiful, and hence dear to him. The bold declaration comes in a poem titled "life" in Sharps and Flats.

This world is beautiful. I do not want to die. I wish to live in the life of man, and have a place in his living heart, as in a sun bright flower full garden.
The joy of living, suddenly and unaccountably, surges up in his heart. He views 'the ceaseless ripple of life on earth' : he feels the happiness of meetings and sadness of partings. He vows to 'wreathe his songs' with human joys and grief's and 'love' in the deathless life of man. If his songs fail to attain immortality, he shall go on producing new flowers of songs both in the morning and the evening. He wants to have a place in the heart of man.

Although Tagore never endorses hedonism, he downright rejects the morality of asceticism which to him is the morality of life-negation. Intoxicated by the beauty of the world, the poet declares that for him there is no 'deliverance' in renunciation. He feels the embrace of freedom in a thousand bonds of delight. God himself beautifies the world. He ever 'pours the fresh draught' of his 'wine of various colors and fragrance, filling this earthen vessel to the brim'. The world of the poet 'will light its different lamps' with his flame. He declares:

No, I will never shut the doors of my senses. The delights of sight and hearing and touch will bear thy delight.
As a result, the poet’s illusions will burn into illumination of joy: and his desire shall ‘ripen’ into fruits of love.

Tagore’s poetry speaks of joyous acceptance of domestic life. It is a folly to prefer the life of asceticism to the happy life in home. The poem “I shall never be an ascetic”\textsuperscript{10} embodies the firm resolves of the poet never to turn an ascetic;

No, my friends, I shall never leave my heart and home, and retire into the forest solitude, if rings no merry laughter in its echoing shade and if the end of the saffron mantle flutters in the wind....

The secret of joy is self – realization and not running after objects of pleasure. Tagore realizes his oneness with the earth and the joy strewn on it. The poem “Farewell to Heaven\textsuperscript{11} testifies to the joy of earthly existence. The poet compares the chilly joy and unruffled happiness of heaven with the woven web of joys and sorrows which forms the life on earth. The poem is one long paean in praises of this lowly earth and its simple human attachments\textsuperscript{12}. The poet finds life in heaven essentially a life of refines sensual pleasures. But he is a devoted son of mother earth. The transient pleasure of heaven essentially a life of refined sensual pleasures. But he is a devoted son of
mother earth. The transient pleasure of heaven seems to have no meaning— for him. In fact, heaven appears to him a lifeless pleasure—resort. He finds no joy of friendly compassion, and no joy of ardent love in heaven. As there is no responsive heart in heaven, heavenly existence is not complete. Happy heaven looks heartless and indifferent, when one departs from heaven. There are no 'eager-arms' and 'tears of joy' to welcome him back. Earth is a fond mother. She has given him a mother's tender reception and in the heart of his beloved, he has found that lover and affection which cannot be dreamt of in heaven. His soul 'cries out' for his mother earth. Her 'tears of grief at the moment of our parting have dried long since': but when he goes back to her 'eager arms', tears of joy will surely be there to make a song of welcome. His joy shall rise to the spiritual climax of sheer ecstasy, the riotous rapture born of the reunion of the eternal mother and the eternal son, and also of the lover and the beloved. The ecstatic state of mind, heart and soul is expressed in a riot of images. The poet returns to the earth with a joyous heart. It is on earth that he shall find 'the being of my heart's desire'. One day 'she will come' to his 'house' dropped in a 'bride's vermeil red', her brow white and fragrant with sandal dust. "She will share all his 'joy' and all his 'sorrow'. He shall see 'the moonlight on my bride's face; he
shall see 'her hair swirled on the pillow', and 'her breast heaving with deep breath'. He shall bind; and 'kiss her on the mouth'. So he prefers the exquisite flow of joy in earthly life to the passionless calm of heaven, and the sensuous joy of love to the passionless beauty of Menaka and Urvashi.

Tagore's approach to joy is not based on intellect, but intuition by which he means a higher contemplation. It reveals to him the universe bathing in the light of beauty and joy. God has created this universe out of joy which may be seen in the image of light. But it is to be borne in mind that pure joy emanates from soul and radiates the world with joy. The idea of joy finds expression in image of sea waves. The poet's joyous eyes see the 'sky devouring waves' as 'the waves of eddying joy'. They are 'glistening with light', 'dancing with life' and 'rushing forever'. These images cast the waves in a cosmic mould, as they dance with life and rush eternally. It is followed by an image which connects the sky with the bottom of the ocean, and the visual beauty with the beauty of rhythm. The poet imparts a metaphysical flavor to the image as the rhythmic movement of the waves is linked with the rhythmic movement of life and death.
The stars rock upon them, thoughts of every tint are east up out of the deep and scattered on the beach of life. Birth and death rise and fall with their rhythm and the sea-gull of my heart spreads its wings crying in delight.

The image of the 'sea-gull' flying and singing in wild 'delight' is akin to the skylark image in Shelley. But the difference is obvious. Shelley's skylark goes on flying up and up and singing joyous songs while shunning the earth below. The sea-gull of Tagore's heart sings of the glory of beauty on the earth.

Before such a sensibility, sorrow loses its place in human life. Whatever is harsh and grating in life melts into sweet harmony of existence. The poem "A sense of being" carries the idea to the level of metaphysics - a poetic metaphysics, of course. The poet realization that despite its fleeting nature, life is a reality. The realization to be 'alive in present' dispels the sorrow which may be brought about by the impending nothingness. The present is of course a little water crop between the ocean of past and of future. The past is a record of the dead, while the future is shrouded in uncertainty. Joy is in turning back on both the
past and the future, and in the enjoyment of the present. The poem opens—against the sunset hour of September. The hour is late and at the ending of the day birds are pouring out ‘in spendthrift abandon all the sweetness of their song’. The poet listens to their sons with an attentive ear. In their song he hears the orchestra of life. The singing birds draw him, mind and body, “into the very heart of melody and color, into a rich mansion rich with play of life. As there birds over sing at sunset hours, they have a message to convey:

The poet is so sure of God’s love that his optimism never waves. Hope in his heart gives way to despair. There is joy in patiently waiting for the coming of the beloved with a sure hope in heart that she shall come. If the beloved is reticent and does not speak, the poet will fill his heart with her silence and endure it. The poet’s patient waiting is expressed through the image of ‘night with starry vigil and its head bent low with patience’ waiting with a sure hope of the arrival of morning light. The poet’s heart exudes confidence as he realizes that morning light and morning songs symbolizing joy and beauty of nature must come to fulfill the longing of the night. They are bound by a law, which is eternal and unchangeable. The idea is expressed
through an image which is a synthesis of visual, kinetic and auditory images:

The image of 'golden streams are breaking through the sky' raises the whole image to a cosmic level, thus raising the idea of love of the cosmic plane and the resultant joy to a heavenly bliss. This kind of joy is a mystic realization. This joy finds expression through the image of light. In "How Thou Singest, My Master"\textsuperscript{15}, the poet finds joy in the inimitable harmony in the universe....... The harmony of the master song of the master singer, God. The poet's mystic sensibility translates the auditory into the visual:

The idea of joy is further expressed in the image of light.\textsuperscript{16} The poet sees the divine light flooding the universe with joy and love:

The phrase 'my darling' is revealing. It is divine light which finds expression through tactual, gustatory and kinetic image. But it is also the light of love and the poet knows it:

The morning light becomes a courier of love. It floods his eyes; it also floods his heart and soul with joy. A joy is
the self-expression of soul, the poet wants to mingle in his 'last song' all the strains of joy.\textsuperscript{17}

The whole universe is suffered with joy, which is reflected through different images. Joy 'is in the earth's green covering of grass'; in the blue serenity of the sky; in the reckless exuberance of spring; in the severe abstinence of grey winter; in the perfect poise of the human figure, noble and upright; in living; in the exercise of all our powers; in the acquisition of knowledge; in fighting evils; and in dying for gains we never can share. Joy is everywhere. It exists to show that the bonds of law can only be explained by love. Joy is the realization of the truth of oneness, the oneness of our soul with the world and of the world with the supreme lover.\textsuperscript{18}

Tagore's idea of joy is generally expressed in nature images. The objects of nature are living individuals and from their joyous life the poet has learnt the secret of joy. In "The rains sweep the sky from end to end", the poet feels an aura of joy in nature:

The poet wishes to fill his heart with this joy of nature and carry it in secret through the day to make it joyous. On a rainy day, his heart assumes the personality of a peacock.\textsuperscript{19}
It spread its plume's tinged with rapturous colors of thoughts. It dances in-joy. It has a longing for the unknown and in ecstasy seeks some vision in the sky. The clouds rumble from sky to sky, 'the shower sweeps horizons', the 'doves shiver in silence in their nest', and the frogs croak in the flooded field. Nature seems to be an aroma of joy, and consequently the poet's heart dances with joy. A limps of beauty, standing on 'the king's tower', she has 'loosened the braid of her dark hair has drawn over her breast the blue veil':

The rain patters on the new leaves of the summer, the 'tremor of the cricket's chirp troubles the shade on the tree', and the 'river overflows its bank washing the village meadow'. There seems the play of joy all around in nature, and consequently the peacock of his heart dances in joy.

The poet seems to postulate that 'there is love in each speak of earth and joy in the spread of the sky'. Their 'whispers' remind him of 'the music of a long silent lullaby' and they bring to his mind 'the smile of a face' which he had seen 'in the gleam of the first day break'. As the dust of the earth is 'touched' by the feet of God, the poet finds joy in becoming dust. It he becomes a flower, it is again a matter of joy because
God takes that flower up in his hand. It is a bliss to live in the life of God:

He is in the sea, on the shore; he is with the ship that carries all.

The poet congratulates himself because he has not wasted his life in searching for the glorious, dry bliss of heaven. As he has loved this earth and found joy in it, he has lived a blessed life:

Whatever I am blessed and blesses is this earth of dear dust.

To live on earth is to live in the will of God who ever mystifies man into joy; and to love the world is to love its creator and, in turn, to win his love. The world is a green field and man is but the gleaner of love and joy. The poet expresses joy with a happy paradox:

I threw away my heart in the world; you took it up. I wrought for joy and gathered sorrow; you gave me sorrow and I found joy.
The poet's heart was scattered in pieces, and there seemed no harmony in it. But she 'picked them up' in her 'hand' and 'strung them in a thread of love'. She 'let his wander from door to door' to show him that she is ever beside him. Her love plunged him into deep troubles. But when he 'raised his head', he found he was at her door. The poem elucidates that besides all troubles and sorrows, love is the last haven of man and is doubtless the mysterious but sure source of joy.

However, real joy is far above the erotic joy: it is the expansion of soul. Tagore achieves the fullness of joy in sorrow caused by the separation in love. The poem "Fullness" shows the poet translating personal grid into creative activity and hence joy. The poem opens with the recollections how two lovers were conscious of impending separation caused by death which might destroy the joy of union. The beloved said that in the absence of her lover her world would turn into a dreary desert, and life become more unbearable than death itself:

Sky – wide weariness will denude my soul of all peace. Congealed grief, joyless and lusterless, will bring death worse than death.
For Tagore this universe is a carnival of beauty. Beauty exists on two different levels – physical and mental. On the physical level, beauty is subject to decay and death; the fleeting nature of beauty causes sorrow in the heart of man. Robert Herrick "fair daffodils", we weep to see expresses a universal anguish on seeing that beauty takes hasty steps towards oblivion. Keats is melancholic because he sees that 'Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eye'. But Tagore is capable of translating the cause of sorrow into a source of joy. The poet has realized that both life and beauty have a kinship with death. It is the eternal law of nature that what comes to stagnation perishes. Therefore, both life and beauty are kept eternally fresh by death. The poem "None lives for ever, brother" is a sagacious advice to those who murder the joy of life by constantly keeping their eyes fixed on the scowling fact of death. The rapid movement of time quickens the sense of urgency in the mind of joy-gleaners:

It is more than a casual statement. It sums up in perspective a cosmic movement – life, love, beauty, moving to their tryst with death. But a man with a positive bent of mind always enjoys this fleeting nature of the objects which are a source of joy. It is a reality and hence joy. Since Tagore sees the timeless in the time bound, he links this reality with the
divine reality. His approach to beauty is aesthetic and not metaphysical. Art is capable of providing the artist with a vision which grantees something of eternity to beauty which seems mortal. So, it is in art that beauty becomes a joy forever.

Tagore does not deny the presence of sorrow and pain in life. But he does not approve of rapid raving over sorrow. Man’s dignity lies in the acceptance of sorrow and in extracting joy from the joyless. The poet feel the fleeting nature of joy, and therefore, embraces sorrow which is lasting:

Still, there is an immense dignity about the way he endures the sorrow of life. The poem “Alone” that he wrote just after the death of his wife shows not only the pathos of his heart but also a sublime resignation to her memory:

Infact, the poet is too wise and matures to become morbid in the face of death. There is a serene grace with which he calls death “O Beautiful End”.
Peace, my heart let the time for the Parting be sweet,
Let it not be death but completeness.
Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.

This melting of love into memory and sublimation of sorrow into song enables the poet's imagination to free itself from the bounds of time and space. One experience of joy becomes an experience of joy forever. The poem "Beholden" is written in a robust mood. The poet's beloved is dead. Many years have come and gone. The poet has forgotten even the pain of separation. But he clearly remembers that it was 'her dark eyes with why and shrinking glances that 'scrolled' in his soul the 'first epistle of love':

When Tagore realizes that one moment of joy is an eternity, the whole universe becomes a play of joy. He does not indulge in the debate as to who is the giver of the joy or why there is joy scattered in the face of the earth. His poetic vision finds joy even in the temporal aspect of natural beauty. The "Balaka" shows that the beauty of nature is an eternal source of joy; it is a joy which is a mystic revelation:
A Tagore reader may call this guide God, in whose presence man ever lives. God is the giver of joy and it is He who direct man on his way back home – home which embodies an image of peace and joy. The poem may be interpreted as an allegory of human soul directed by the Supreme Soul from one joy to another. Such a joy is not a pleasure of flesh; it is a spiritual experience and hence a bliss, an indivisible joy.
NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Quoted by Prabas Jiban Chaudhary in Tagore on Literature and Aesthetics, p. 91.

2. ibid.

3. ibid, p. 91


5. One Hundred One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, p. xxii.

6. Religion of Man, p. 58.


8. One Hundred One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, p. 6.


13. Fruit Gathering, p. 98.

14. One Hundred One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 151-152.

15. ibid, p. 3.

16. ibid, pp. 52-53.

17. ibid, p. 53.


20. ibid, p. 30.

21. One Hundred One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, p. 47.

22. The Gardener, pp. 91-94.


24. One Hundred One Poems by Rabindranath Tagore, pp. 113-114.


26. ibid, p. 108.